

EDITORIAL.

DURING THE PRESENT MONTH there are meeting in Buffalo three botanical organizations of national scope: the Botanical Club of the A. A. A. S., the Botanical Section of the A. A. A. S., and the Botanical Society of America. Each organization has its own peculiar field, and has been a natural outgrowth from the remarkable botanical activity of the last few years. The question has been raised frequently whether this may not be an unnecessary multiplication of botanical organizations, and whether they may not overlap and interfere with each other. An examination of the original purpose of each makes it evident that no interference is contemplated.

THE BOTANICAL CLUB of the A. A. A. S. was organized when the botany of the Association was but a part of the Biological Section, and its double purpose was to bring the botanists together in a meeting of their own, and to provide a means for the informal presentation of botanical matters of interest and importance, but not adapted to formal presentation. There was no qualification excepting membership in the American Association, even those merely interested in botany being invited to enroll as members. It thus became and continues to be a very general botanical conference, with just organization enough to keep it in existence, and no publication. It is the best organization for the cultivation of a general botanical acquaintance, and the only botanical organization not strictly professional. It was not intended as an overflow from the Biological Section of the Association, except so far as the section was burdened by botanical material not properly belonging to it.

THE BOTANICAL SECTION of the A. A. A. S. was next established, when the botanical papers of the Biological Section justified a separate section. The papers of this organization are intended to be formal and professional, and are published by abstract in the widely circulated Proceedings of the Association, but the only limit to membership is the fee of the general Association. That botanists have repeatedly mistaken the purpose of this organization and have presented loose and rambling talks rather than formal and compact papers is not due

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to any fault in the design of the organization. However, while the papers are intended to be professional, the audience is miscellaneous, and the subjects selected or their treatment takes cognizance of this fact. It is the place where investigators seek to present their results to the general scientific public, and a semi-popular style is demanded.

THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, the most recent of these organizations, is purely professional, both as to membership and audience, and the papers which naturally belong to it are not adapted to either of the other organizations, for they are technical in subject matter and style, and are all prepared for publication in full.

IT WOULD SEEM, from the above presentation, that there is abundant reason for the continued existence of all these organizations, and that they furnish the natural channels of communication for every grade of botanical work, from the briefly stated observations of the amateur to the most elaborate researches of the professional. The first organization has in view the gathering up of miscellaneous observations; the second regards the interest of the public in the results of investigations; the third is concerned solely with the progress of botanical science.

WE HAVE ALREADY alluded to the neglect of foreign literature by some German botanists, as illustrated by the paper of Dr. Correns on the physiology of tendrils.¹ Professor MacDougal called attention to Correns' culpable oversight in a recent note in the *Botanisches Centralblatt*.² Correns' reply in the same journal³ makes the rather curious plea in extenuation, "dass die BOTANICAL GAZETTE in der jene Angaben publicirt wurden, in Tübingen nicht existirt." What would be thought of an American student who excused himself for not knowing of Correns' work by saying that the *Botanische Zeitung* was not to be found in his college library? While the two cases are not precisely parallel they are sufficiently so to show the invalidity of Dr. Correns' plea. And what bearing has Correns' assertion that the first experiment by which he recognized the heat reaction was performed a year before the publication of MacDougal's paper? It would have been much better for Dr. Correns not to plead "extenuating circumstances," but to content himself with a frank acknowledgment of his oversight. We hope the incident will awaken our German friends to the need of consulting at least the index to American botanical literature.

¹ BOT. GAZ. 21: 248, 398, 304. 1896.

² 66: 145. 1896.

³ 66: 290. 1896.